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8-12-58

Ben-Nathan, Asher  
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Eastern diplomats are angry about the reports in the Israel press on Birobidjan and the intentions of the Soviet authorities to transfer Jews by force to this area. They do not disclaim the possibility that the Soviet authorities will try and encourage Jews to resettle there, and they admit that there is a Jewish problem in the USSR and other Communist countries. But most Russian Jews identify themselves with their homeland and hold high and important posts in the government, just like the American Jews. They admit however, that the problem is more serious in certain areas attached to Russia after World War II.

They point out that if Russia allowed large-scale emigration to Israel there would be a negative reaction from the UAR. Therefore the key to larger emigration is improvement in Israel-Arab relations.

The diplomats said further that the best way to improve relations with the USSR would be to refrain from anti-Soviet attacks. "We do not ask that the Israel press be pro-Soviet, but that it should report objectively".

Commenting on the recent books which have appeared in the Soviet Union on Israel, the diplomats said: "Everything in these publications is true and objective. They do not attack the Israel nation but its leaders."

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#### PRESS RESTRICTIONS

Haboker editorial - December 8

The Attorney General, Mr. Haim Cohen, who reportedly dislikes the press, has issued stringent instructions to District Attorneys and to the Inspector General of Police, to bring suits in every case of press intervention in court proceedings and revelation of the names of detainees. The purpose of these instructions is none other than to restrict the press, which is accustomed to getting information from the Police - including the names of detainees - and hence has often published these names before the detainee has actually been found guilty. Until now, the Attorney General never objected; why does he do so now? Probably because the ruling party did not like the publicity around Aharon Cohen - and this party has some influence on Mr. Haim Cohen.

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#### AFTERNOON PRESS

ROUNTREE IN BEIRUT TODAY

Maariv - December 8

Radio Beirut announced this morning that Rountree is expected there today and that from Beirut Rountree will go to Jerusalem and Amman. He will be in Cairo on December 12th, and from there will go to Baghdad.

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BEN-NATHAN CANDIDATE FOR PERES' POST

Yediot Aharonot - December 8

The paper's military correspondent writes that Arthur Ben-Nathan, head of the Defense Ministry's mission in France, will probably be appointed Director General of that Ministry after Peres resigns next year.

Peres announced recently that he is going to resign his post as Director General of the Ministry of Defense in order to devote himself entirely to political activities. He is going to run for the Knesset and will be principal assistant to B.G., who will remain Minister of Defense also after the elections.

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Wednesday's meeting will be attended by Rabbi Unterman, the Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, as well as by NRP MKs Dr. Burg, Rafael, and others. Delegations from Mapai and Mapam will bring greetings.

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#### ELECTORAL REFORM GIST OF THIS WEEK'S KNESSET DEBATES

Haaretz, Haboker, Lamerhav (Dec. 8):

Electoral reform will make up the gist of the Knesset's debates this week. Tomorrow the Knesset will start the debate on three motions concerned with a public referendum on the election system, the motions of Almogi (Mapai), Serlin (G.Z.) and Dr. Nir (Ahdut).

For the time being the question is only whether Almogi's and Serlin's motions are to be struck off the agenda or to be passed to committee to be prepared for the second reading. If Dr. Nir's motion is passed (submitting that referenda are unconstitutional) the other two motions will be voided in any case. For this reason Mapai has proposed to the Knesset Presidium to permit a debate on the three motions in a bloc, which may give them a chance of getting into the committee stage. Otherwise the motions will only be supported by the factions proposing them, although, according to Lamerhav, Mapai is still ready to support the G.Z. motion, despite the fact that the G.Z. have announced that they will not support Mapai's.

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ROKACH'S LETTER TO GOVRIN CONFIRMED  
BY G.Z. EXECUTIVE.

Lamerhav (Dec. 7):

The paper's correspondent reports that the G.Z. Knesset faction issued a statement confirming that Rokach's letter to Mapai whip Govrin (that the G.Z. would not vote for Almogi's referendum motion) had been sent with the approval of the G.Z. executive. (See HDPH of Dec. 5 - page 3).

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#### EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS ON CHANCES OF IMMIGRATION

Haaretz's diplomatic correspondent Zeev Katz writes:

East European diplomats in Israel commented on B.G.'s remarks about the "second miracle of our generation" in his speech launching the "Immigration Loan" a few days ago. These diplomats said that statements about the "redemption of Jews from some countries" and all the propaganda in the press will not do the cause of immigration any good.

"It is natural," they said "that we attach great importance to such statements. It seems to us that Ben Gurion would not have made them if the Zionists had not had some success in this field. It is known, however, that in the USSR there are certain organizations who deal with movements which operate against the law and it is assumed that these organizations will attend to this matter as well."

(more)